

TO: BGN Foreign Names Committee
FROM: Trent Palmer, Staff
SUBJECT: MARITIME FEATURES
DATE: 29 November 2005

The maritime feature policy statement is attached.

Please consider this policy in light of previous discussions, the previous draft policy and the revised PCGN Guidelines. The FNC 337 Meeting Minutes contain a summary of what the Committee agreed upon at that time. The attached glossary of terms has since been reviewed by the Department of State.



UNITED STATES BOARD ON GEOGRAPHIC NAMES
Foreign Geographic Names:
Standardization Policy:
Names of Maritime Features

The Board's Foreign Geographic Names Standardization Principles apply to foreign geographic names in general and form the basis for the Board's foreign names decisions. Additional normative regulations must be developed to address specific geographic and linguistic phenomena peculiar to countries or regional areas. Special classes of place-names, such as high seas features, may also require special analysis and treatment. For this reason the Board develops supplementary standardization policy and procedure on a country basis, and to address specific standardization issues.

Policy: Names of Maritime Features

Definition: All waters and features located beyond the outer limit of State's internal waters, also to include any waters where international rights of passage exist.

Maritime features may be divided into categories based on feature type and location. The feature types under consideration include oceans and seas, archipelagic waters, straits, and undersea features. Location references the geographic and legal realm and includes the high seas, archipelagic waters, international straits, territorial seas and internal waters.

Policy:

- 1) The standardization policy for undersea features located in the high seas is set forth in "Guidelines for the Standardization of Undersea Feature Names" (awaiting BGN approval).
- 2) Conventional names only will be approved for the following:
 - a) Those parts of the high seas that are bordered by land areas having different sovereignty and language
Example: Persian Gulf
 - b) An exception will be made when the feature has no conventional name; in such cases local official names only will be approved
Example: Skagerrak
 - c) International waters (shared or divided sovereignty) with rights of transit passage
Example: Strait of Gibraltar
- 3) Local official names and, where they exist, conventional names will be approved for the following:
 - a) Those parts of the high seas formed by recession in the continuous coast of one country.
Example: Gulf of Sidra [conventional]; Khalij Surt [Arabic]
 - b) Those parts of the high seas bordered only by land areas having the same sovereignty
Example: Java Sea [conventional]; Laut Java [Indonesian]
 - c) Those parts of the high seas bordered only by land areas having the same official language.
Example: Gulf of Sollum [conventional]; Khalij as Sallūm [EGYPT, LIBYA]
 - d) Shipping canals governed by international treaty
Example: Panama Canal [conventional]; Canal de Panamá [Spanish]
 - e) Waters with archipelagic sea lanes passage rights
Example: Makassar Strait [conventional]; Selat Makasar [Indonesian]

- 4) Local official names only will be approved for the following:
 - a) Territorial seas subject to innocent passage. Country-specific policies apply. Features deemed in need of a conventional name could be considered on a case by case basis by the FNC.
 - b) All undersea features within internal and territorial seas.

Additional Guidance:

- 1) It is understood, but perhaps unappreciated reality, that geographic features and their names exist in an often ambiguous hierarchy, or system of extent (e.g. Finsteraarhorn/Berner Alpen/Alps). Naturally, this situation also exists for high seas features (e.g. Golfo di Genova/Ligurian Sea/Mediterranean Sea). Any one location within the area overlapped by the features/names could be identified with any of the available names. It is the recommendation of the US BGN that the user be allowed the freedom to use the most scale-appropriate approved name, suiting the specific application.
- 2) BGN-approved geographic names are either categorized as conventional or native names. It is generally understood that, when available, these are the only names that should be used on US Government products. The addition of an unapproved, but sometimes beneficial, variant in parenthesis, is generally left up to discretion of the user. However, in the case of high seas features, the US BGN strongly discourages the use of variants in parenthesis following the approved name.

Glossary of terms:

Note: All terms should be viewed with the idea of being in conformity with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (LOS Convention)

archipelagic baseline – see **baseline**

archipelagic sea lane – designated sea lanes and air routes thereabove, suitable for the continuous and expeditious passage of foreign ships and aircraft through or over archipelagic waters and the adjacent territorial sea [Part IV, Article 53].

archipelagic sea lanes passage – the exercise ... of the rights of navigation and overflight in the normal mode solely for the purpose of continuous, expeditious and unobstructed transit between one part of the high sea or an exclusive economic zone and another part of the high seas or an exclusive economic zone [Part IV, Article 53]

archipelagic State – a State constituted wholly by one or more archipelagos and may include other islands [Part IV, Article 46] (see list).

archipelagic waters – the waters enclosed by straight archipelagic baselines.

baseline – the line from which the outer limits of a State's territorial sea and certain other limits of coastal State jurisdiction are measured.

exclusive economic zone – an area beyond and adjacent to the territorial sea, subject to the specific legal regime established in the relevant Part of the LOS Convention, under which the rights and jurisdiction of the coastal State and the rights and freedoms of other States are governed by the relevant provisions of this Convention [Part V, Article 55].

high seas (BGN) – all waters beyond the outer limit of the territorial sea and archipelagic waters.

high seas (IHO / UNCLOS) – all parts of the sea that are not included in the exclusive economic zone, in the territorial sea or in the internal waters of a State, or in the archipelagic waters of an archipelagic State [Part VII, Article 86].

internal waters – waters on the landward side of the baseline of the territorial sea form part of the internal waters of the State [Part II, Article 8].

international straits – straits which are used for international navigation between one part of the high seas or an exclusive economic zone and another part of the high seas or an exclusive economic zone [Part III, Article 37]. In straits referred to in article 37, all ships and aircraft enjoy the right of transit passage [Article 38].

territorial sea – a belt of water of a defined breadth but not exceeding 12 nautical miles measured seaward from the territorial sea baseline

transit passage – the exercise in accordance with this Part of the freedom of navigation and overflight solely for the purpose of continuous and expeditious transit of the strait between one part of the high seas or an exclusive economic zone and another part of the high seas or an exclusive economic zone [Part III, Article 38].

The full text of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea is available at:

(http://www.un.org/Depts/los/convention_agreements/convention_overview_convention.htm)

Part I – IX (of XVII total) and Annex II (of IX total) are included in TALOS

States claiming archipelagic status:

Antigua and Barbuda
The Bahamas
Cape Verde
Comoros
Fiji
Indonesia
Jamaica
Kiribati
Maldives
Marshall Islands
Papua New Guinea
Philippines
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
Sao Tome and Principe
Seychelles
Solomon Islands
Trinidad and Tobago
Tuvalu
Vanuatu